

#### Members

Rep. Cindy Noe, Chairperson  
Rep. Charlie Brown  
Sen. Connie Lawson  
Sen. Vi Simpson  
Loretta Kroin  
Kathleen O'Connell  
Chuck Clark  
Chris Taelman  
Stacey Ryan  
Margie Payne  
Ronda Ames  
Jane Horn  
Abigail P. Flynn  
Valerie N. Markley  
Bryan Lett  
Caroline Doebbeling  
Kurt Carlson



## COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH

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Authority: P. L. 243-2003

### REVISED MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting Date:** September 20, 2006  
**Meeting Time:** 1:00 P.M.  
**Meeting Place:** State House, 200 W. Washington St., the House Chambers  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 2

**Members Present:** Rep. Cindy Noe, Chairperson; Sen. Connie Lawson; Sen. Vi Simpson; Loretta Kroin; Kathleen O'Connell; Chuck Clark; Chris Taelman; Stacey Ryan; Margie Payne; Ronda Ames; Jane Horn; Abigail P. Flynn; Valerie N. Markley; Caroline Doebbeling.

**Members Absent:** Rep. Charlie Brown; Kurt Carlson; Bryan Lett.

#### **I. Call to Order**

Representative Noe called the meeting to order at 1:12 pm and announced the next meeting dates of the Commission: October 11<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm in Conference Room 22 of the Indiana Government Center-South (IGCS); October 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm in Conference Room C of the IGCS.

Representative Noe then stated that at the previous meeting the Commission heard from Kathy Boggs and Dennis Jones regarding Indiana's transformation of mental health, and that a part of the transformation includes children. The Children's Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan was created by the state to create a venue to consider alternative ways that children could be treated for mental health issues in Indiana. The idea for the Plan originated from Representative Behning and troubles he encountered when attempting to navigate the mental health system and obtain services for his adopted daughter. As a result of his experiences, Representative Behning, Judge Payne, and Bob Marra met to discuss ways to make the mental health system easier to access. Legislation was then passed in SEA 529 -

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

2005, which required the Plan to be created.

## **II. Presentation by Mr. Bob Marra, Associate Superintendent, Indiana Department of Education**

Mr. Marra presented information about the Children's Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan. The presentation included information about: (a) legislative history pertaining to the Plan; (b) members of the interagency task force which formulated the Plan; and (c) the components of the Plan (early identification and assessment, accountability and outcome measurement, finance and budget, best practices, obtaining services and referral networks, early learning foundations and Indiana academic standards, and workforce development training) (see Exhibits A and B).

Mr. Marra also provided Commission members with two additional handouts, early intervening services (see Exhibit C) and the School Cooperative Medicaid/IEP Services Report (see Exhibit D).

## **III. Presentation by Mr. John Price, John Price and Associates, and Mrs. Theresa Rhoades**

Mr. Price discussed a pending law suit in which he is representing the parents of a child who was assessed at school. The parents are suing the school corporation and have alleged that the survey was erroneous, improper, and done with reckless disregard for their child's welfare.

Mr. Price provided the Commission with various materials related to the mental health assessment of children. The non-copyrighted materials are included as Exhibits E & F.

Mrs. Rhoades discussed the emotional and other impact that her child's school's testing program has had upon her family. She also described her repeated requests for copies of materials and her frustration at being unable to obtain them. Finally, she expressed her opinion regarding the negative impact mental health screening of teenagers will have on families.

## **IV. Public Testimony**

Public testimony was presented to the Commission from seven audience members.

(1) Dr. Ben Choiniere testified that he does not believe that emotions, such as grief, fear, and anxiety, are mental illnesses. Furthermore, such emotions can be fixed by letting them run their course. He stated that there is no evidence which indicates that the diagnoses which are being assigned to individuals are effective and can be treated. Dr. Choiniere also stated that there is a pattern happening worldwide that the United States is not following. While other countries are banning medications, the United States is embracing them.

(2) Mr. Joseph Venable from NAMI Indiana provided testimony to the Commission about the importance of mental health screening for children. Furthermore, not treating children for mental health disorders can be extremely detrimental to the child (see Exhibit G).

(3) Ms. Deborah Washburn from NAMI Indiana presented a letter to the Commission which described her personal experiences with early mental health diagnosis. Ms. Washburn also indicated her support for creation of the Plan and actual implementation of the Plan (see

Exhibit H).

(4) Ms. Pam McConey from NAMI Indiana presented a letter to the Commission from Teresa Hatten and Catherine Duchovic, NAMI president and vice-president. The letter included a statement of support for the Plan, personal experiences with diagnosis of children with mental illness, issues surrounding ignoring children's mental health needs (for example, that parents are often forced to relinquish parental rights to obtain services for children), and that there is a need for additional services in the state (see Exhibit I).

Ms. McConey also distributed an article to the Commission entitled, "Spending Money in all the Wrong Places: School Failure" (see Exhibit J), and a publication entitled, "NAMI Beginnings" (Summer 2006, Issue 8) (see Exhibit K).

(5) Ms. Kristen Luidhart from the Public Policy for Indiana Eagle Forum presented information to the Commission pertaining to her concerns about the Plan. Her presentation included discussion about parental rights, potential for racial profiling and discrimination, subjective testing and lack of scientific evidence, and the cost for implementation of the Plan (see Exhibit L).

(6) Mr. Ed Sparks stated that he does not support the Plan. He is particularly concerned about the fact that there is no opt-out provision for parents in the Plan and that privacy is not guaranteed.

(7) Mr. Will Longstreet from the Indiana Association of School Psychologists (IASP) presented information to the Commission about school psychologists and the fact that they are the only professional body in Indiana that is equally trained in both education and mental health. The IASP believes that Indiana's schools are the logical entry point for universal access to mental health services, given their extensive contact with virtually every child and adolescent in the state. IASP supports any effort that will successfully provide access to necessary mental health services for children and adolescents in Indiana, and school psychologists are prepared to take a lead role in the coordination and provision of any school-based mental health programs and interagency collaboration that may result.

## **V. Other Business**

Representative Noe distributed a CD to Commission members (see Exhibit M) entitled "The Dangers of Universal Health Screening" by Dr. Karen R. Effrem. She also attached a copy of Dr. Effrem's vitae (see Exhibit N). She asked that Commission members view the CD and consider it. However, she stated that the CD should be seen as only one piece of the puzzle which should be considered when contemplating issues pertaining to children's mental health screening, not as an answer.

## **VI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 pm.